

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SS-20 NSC-07 SSO-00 NSCE-00

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 SY-04 SCS-03

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O 041400Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1847

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7394

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, IN

SUBJECT: HARCOS/FLETCHER

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FINALLY SEEMS TO BE MOVING ON THE HARCOS/FLETCHER MATTER. WHEN THE CHARGE SAW TEJA THIS AFTERNOON, HE CONFIRMED THAT SPECIFIC CHARGES HAD BEEN BROUGHT UNDER SECTION 3 OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT. THE CHARGES WERE THAT HARCOS HAD BEEN FOUND IN A RESTRICTED AREA UNDER SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES. THERE WAS NO ESPIONAGE ANGLE; THIS WAS NOT A SPY CASE. TEJA PARTICULARLY REQUESTED THAT SINCE THE MATTER IS SUB JUDICE THE CHARGES BE KEPT ENTIRELY CONFIDENTIAL AND IN PARTICULAR NOT BE CONVEYED TO THE PRESS. TEJA REPEATED THAT THE AUTHORITIES IN WEST BENGAL HAVE BEEN ASKED TO EXPEDITE THE CASE.

2. TEJA SAID THE HOME MINISTRY IN NEW DELHI HAS BEEN KEEPING TRACK OF THE CASE, STAYING IN TOUCH WITH BOTH MEA AND THE WEST BANGAL AUTHORITIES. MRS. FLETCHER HAS WRITTEN TO THE HOME MINISTER. JUDGING FROM WHAT TEJA SAID, THE GOI SEEMS TO BE PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO FLETCHER BUT TEJA
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WAS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT BOTH HARCOS AND

FLETCHER WOULD RECEIVE THE SAME TREATMENT. TEJA VOLUNTEERED THE ASSURANCE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM WHATSOEVER IN HAVING A US OBSERVER PRESENT AT THE TRIAL WHEN IT BEGINS. TEJA ALSO POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE INDIAN CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE TIME SPENT IN JAIL PRIOR TO TRIAL IS DEDUCTED FROM THE SENTENCE.

3. FOR CALCUTTA: THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME CONFUSION OVER WHETHER THE TRIAL IS ACTUALLY IN PROCESS. IN ANY EVENT, YOU SHOULD SEEK PERMISSION FOR A CONSULAR OBSERVER AT THE TRIAL. YOU SHOULD REPORT SHOULD STATE THAT THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN ASSURED BY THE GOI (TEJA IN MEA) THAT WE MAY HAVE SUCH AN OBSERVER. PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED OF ANY INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN WHAT YOU FIND IN CALCUTTA AND WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD HERE. WE IN TURN WILL KEEP AFTER MEA. SCHNEIDER

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